



The President's Daily Brief

Top Secret 27 January 1968



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi to Release Three US Pilots: Hanoi's domestic radio service broadcast the announcement this morning that the North Vietnamese army, "on the occasion of Tet," had decided to release three US "aggressor pilots" captured in North Vietnam. These pilots, the broadcast went on, had "displayed a repentant attitude" during the period of their detention.

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More Hanoi Comment on the Pueblo Seizure: The Hanoi party daily Nhan Dan, in an editorial broadcast internationally on 26 January, condemned as "a new act of war provocation" the sending of a US "spy ship" into North Korean territorial waters and praised the Koreans for "neatly capturing the whole US gang of spies and their ship." In keeping with other Hanoi comment on the incident, there was no effort to tie the seizure of the Pueblo to the situation in Vietnam.

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Hanoi Urges Property Inventory: A late December article in the party journal urged cadre, workers and government employees to tighten property management systems and work for more accurate inventory methods during the current "war environment." The article said a number of people had not recognized their responsibility in the protection of government property and declared "waste and corruption are still widespread."

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Mai Van Bo Gets a Flag: Mai Van Bo's efforts to obtain from the French Government more of the prerogatives which go with his claimed status as head of a diplomatic mission are making some headway. Bo is now flying a flag on his official vehicle and he will soon be given diplomatic plates. Heretofore, the North Vietnamese delegate general had been driving around Paris with temporary tourist license plates.

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Hanoi on Tet Truce: Hanoi propaganda on the impending Tet truce has continued to contrast the shortened 36 hour allied ceasefire with the "more humane" seven day standdown the Liberation Front has called for. The Communists at the same time have gone to some length to document alleged US truce violations during the Christmas and New Year periods and to imply that the "weakened position" of the US will bring about additional violations during Tet.

A 25 January Hanoi broadcast set the tone of Communist comment. It claimed that the shortening of the allied truce from 48 to 36 hours was a manifestation of the difficult situation and the "savagage nature" of the allies, who demonstrated no regard for the South Vietnamese people. The statement went on to list alleged US violations of past truces and to underscore the fact that the Liberation Front's seven day standdown was undertaken out of "deep respect for the people's customs and habits."

New French Press Agency Correspondent About to Leave for Hanoi: The US embassy in Paris reports that French Press Agency correspondent Jean Le Mauff will leave Paris on 29 January and arrive in Hanoi on 2 February to replace the present Agency correspondent there, Bernard Cabanes. In a conversation with the embassy in early January Le Mauff gave the impression of being generally pro-American, anti-Communist and having an open mind on his Vietnam assignment.

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Hanoi Newspapers Merge: Hanoi has merged the two local dailies that serve the metropolitan Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The official explanation for the merger is that the two newspapers (Thu Do, the local party daily, and Thoi Moi, the local government paper) served the same readership and that a single newspaper would enable the party and the government to "more efficiently realize their approaches and policies."

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The official explanation suggests that the party may be having difficulty supervising both these publications and that some news items out of step with the official party line may have sneaked through. It is equally possible, however, that the reason for the merger is that the readership of these newspapers has diminished because of the extensive evacuation of the capital area. One newspaper can probably adequately cover subscription needs, and will help to take some of the pressure off local propaganda authorities. It is also possible that the bombings have in some way affected the Hanoi publishing business as they have other Hanoi enterprises.

II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Nothing of significance to report.

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